

CLAIMS

1. A distributed digital television system comprising a plurality of discrete television sets and means for decoding digital television signals for display at the television sets, characterised in that the said means for decoding comprises a respective plurality of distributed signal decoding arrangements and further includes means for transferring decoding authorization data over a network linking the said plurality of television sets in the system and from a digital decoding arrangement associated with one television set to a digital decoding arrangement associated with another television set.

2. A system as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the said network comprises a television signal distribution network for delivering digital television signals to the television sets.

3. A system as claimed in Claim 1 wherein said network is formed by a radio frequency feeder cables of the distribution system.

4. A system as claimed in Claim 1 and arranged such that the decoding authorization data is arranged to be transferred between the television sets under a separate cryptographic layer of security.

5. A system as claimed in Claim 1 wherein each television set includes a respective digital decoding arrangement.

6. A system as claimed in Claims 1 wherein the digital decoding arrangement is arranged to receive coded digital television signals and to input and output decoding authorization data for the authorization of the decoding of digital television signals either locally within the television set or remotely at another television set within the system.

7. A system as claimed in Claim 1 wherein the decoding authorization data comprises a cryptographic key information.

8. Digital television apparatus including a digital signal decoding arrangement for receiving coded digital television signals and means for the input and output of decoding authorization data serving to control the decoding of the digital television signal either locally within the apparatus or remotely at further digital television apparatus.

9. An apparatus as claimed in Claim 8, and comprising a paired television set and digital decoding arrangement including demultiplexing means for splitting decoding authorization data from a received digital television signal.

10. A method of controlling the distribution of digital television signals within a digital television system comprising a plurality of discrete television sets, including the steps of decoding the digital television signals for display at the television sets and characterized by the steps of decoding incoming television signals locally at each television set and distributing decoding authorization data between television sets within the system such that decoding authorization data from a digital decoding arrangement associated with one television set can be transferred for operation in association with a digital decoding arrangement associated with another television set.